

May 2013

Theory of knowledge prescribed titles

Instructions to candidates

Your theory of knowledge essay for examination must be submitted to your teacher for authentication. It must be written on one of the six titles (questions) provided below. You may choose any title, but are recommended to consult with your teacher. Your essay will be marked according to the assessment criteria published in the *Theory of Knowledge* guide. The focus of your essays should be on knowledge issues. Where appropriate, refer to other parts of your IB programme and to your experiences as a knower. Always justify your statements and provide relevant examples to illustrate your arguments. Pay attention to the implications of your arguments, and remember to consider what can be said against them. If you use external sources, cite them according to a recognized convention.

Note that statements in quotations in these titles are not necessarily authentic: they present a real point of view but may not be direct quotes. It is appropriate to analyse them but it is unnecessary, even unwise, to spend time on researching a context for them.

Examiners mark essays against the title as set. Respond to the title exactly as given; do not alter it in any way.

Your essay must be between 1200 and 1600 words in length, double spaced and typed in size 12 font.

1. In what ways may disagreement aid the pursuit of knowledge in the natural and human sciences?
2. “Only seeing general patterns can give us knowledge. Only seeing particular examples can give us understanding.” To what extent do you agree with these assertions?
3. “The possession of knowledge carries an ethical responsibility.” Evaluate this claim.
4. The traditional TOK diagram indicates four ways of knowing. Propose the inclusion of a fifth way of knowing selected from intuition, memory or imagination, and explore the knowledge issues it may raise in two areas of knowledge.
5. “That which can be asserted without evidence can be dismissed without evidence.” (Christopher Hitchens). Do you agree?
6. Can we know when to trust our emotions in the pursuit of knowledge? Consider history and one other area of knowledge.